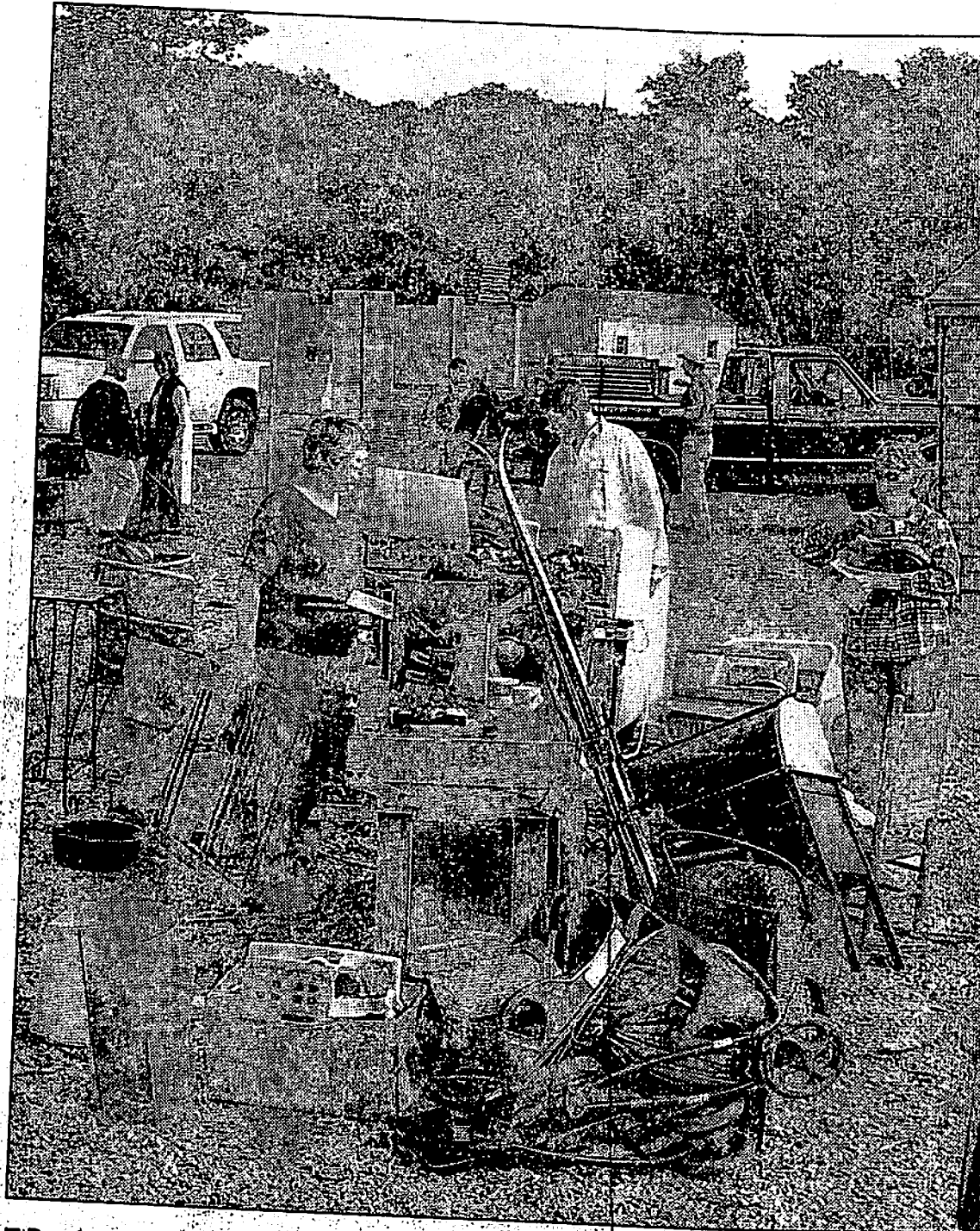


Receiving

Saturday/Sunday, November 6-7, 2004

The Patriot Ledger

THE DUXBURY MALL



■ People check out items left at the Duxbury Transfer Station, also known as the "Duxbury Mall" because of the seemingly endless amount of merchandise.

JEFF LOUGHLIN photos/The Patriot Ledger

BEST DEALS IN TOWN

Transfer station
is where you'll find
hidden treasures

By **KAREN GOULART**
The Patriot Ledger

As shopping malls go, this one doesn't look like much.
It's just a clearing of crushed rock strewn with bits of ribbon, stray Legos and the occasional doll parts, west of the clothing drop and south of the compost pile. Along the perimeter are two small sheds — one for books, one for knickknacks.

**"People come
down here on
a Sunday
morning and
bring their
coffee."**

Ed Vickers

and his wife, Sheryl "shopped the mall" one recent weekend. "It's really useful, and they keep it clean. When you leave stuff you hope it can do good for someone else."

One weekend the Snyders picked up a golf

Still, the variety of merchandise is endless, and the prices are right; there is no better bargain than free.

Welcome to the "Duxbury Mall."

That's the way locals refer to the town transfer station, where an area is set aside for residents to leave items they no longer want and find items they're convinced they need.

"You never know what you're going to get when you come here," Steve Snyder said, as he



■ Jim Compton of Duxbury finds a Barbie Jeep for his granddaughter at the transfer station.

cart. On this day, in addition to the soon-to-be chew toys, Steve grabbed an amplifier he guessed could be worth about \$1,000. It just needed some fixing.

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Richard Miller of Duxbury looks for a gem at the "Duxbury Mall."

DAVID GORDON/For The Patriot Ledger

Transfer station full of bargains

■ MALL

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Duxbury is a town where the median house price is close to \$600,000 and average household income is above \$97,000, but that doesn't mean residents can't appreciate a bargain.

The mall is so popular that a 15-minute parking limit had to be imposed, said public works operations manager Ed Vickers.

"People come down here on a Sunday morning and bring their coffee," Vickers said. "If they come after church they'll stand around, talk about the sermon."

Retired English teacher Bob Marcell keeps the books in order, separating them by subject, alphabetizing and tossing out the junk.

Jorene Camara appreciates his work. She and her husband stop by once a week to borrow and return books they read or share with others who can't get to the mall.

She has a rule many who pass through claim to live by, "I never take more than I leave."

Then she says something few expect to hear: "I love the dump."

Dave Elliot is responsible for keeping the mall clean. If he didn't monitor it, often keeping watch while perched in a bulldozer, the wrong things could get in.

On a recent Saturday morning he admonished a patron for leaving a broken footstool.

"New rule, no broken stuff," he tells the woman who argues it can still be used.

Elliot said some people are protective of their castoffs, even though they are, after all, casting them off. Others are disappointed when they see something one day and come back the next to find it gone.

Elliot said if the area isn't cleared out each day, too much stuff piles up.

The mall is not just a boon to bargain-minded shoppers. It can save the town money, too. Every item taken is one that won't have to be hauled away to a landfill.

He said about 10 or 15 percent of what comes in is picked up by someone else.

"But, a lot of it comes right back," he said. "I'd like to set up a no return policy."

Everyone has their reasons for stopping by. One mother of a college student looks for things to help furnish her son's apartment. Antique hunters look for unnoticed treasures.

Cliff Bockard said he is more of a dropper than a shopper, but every now and then he finds a gem.

"I picked up an old steamer chest that I'm reconditioning," Bockard said before heading to the book shed.

For about five minutes the table is nearly empty, but the cars keep arriving and along came a fish tank, a stew pot, a red chain-saw and three rocking chairs in need of caning.



JEFF LOUGHLIN/The Patriot Ledger

Nina Joyce of Duxbury looks over reading material at the Duxbury Transfer Station.

Alvena Costa and Richard Hughes pulled up with dozens of record albums to unload.

They tried to go by the take no more than you leave rule, but soon Costa had her hands full.

"I get toys for my little granddaughter, some of them are brand new," Costa said. "We got a desk for our home, and we get books all the time."

Hughes warns, though, that sometimes the mall can be the site of spats between couples who can't agree on how much is too much to take home.

Costa just laughed.

"Look how nice these chairs are," she said of the seatless rockers.

Hughes shook his head and chuckled, "Let's go."

Less than 20 minutes later Costa and Hughes were back. One of the rockers got crammed into the back seat.

"Woo-hoo!" Costa squealed as the car rumbled away.

Some rules are made to be broken.

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